



EX PARTE
Federal Communications Commission
Washington, D.C. 20554

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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF SECRETARY

Mr. Lawrence Kasdan
345 North Maple Drive
Suite #209
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Dear Mr. Kasdan:

On behalf of Chairman Hundt, I would like to thank you for your recent letter regarding the presentation to the Commission of a recommendation for an Advanced Television standard.

On November 28, 1995 we received a report from the Commission's Advisory Committee on Advanced Television Services (ACATS) making its recommendation. This matter is currently still under consideration by the Commission, and no final decisions have been made. The FCC will be considering a total of at least three Notices on this issue which, when taken together, will provide a complete and current record on all aspects relating to the creation of our nation's digital broadcast service. The first of this trilogy was released August 9, 1995, in anticipation of the final report and recommendation made by ACATS. Comments were received in late November and replies were due January 22, 1996.

We expect to release two more Notices this year. One will address the specific standard for transmission of digital television, which is the focus of your concerns. The other will take up the methodology of assigning channels for digital service to eligible parties. Through the process of notice, comment and reply, the Commission is able to consider a wide variety of proposals.

Many computer enthusiasts are concerned, and rightfully so, about the impact the standard's adoption would have on scanning formats. One such format is progressive scanning, typically used on computer monitors, which is preferable for still images or high resolution graphics. The other is interlace, typically used in analog television sets, which many feel is more appropriate for preserving consumer's access to the vast body of work already created for television. Similarly, many in the cinematic community, such as yourself, have expressed concerns regarding the appearance of their work on the small screen of television, whether it be today's 4:3 aspect ratio or the proposed wide screen 16:9 dimensions. Please take note that all permutations of scanning modes and aspect ratios are supported by the standard recommended by the ACATS, and would not prevent the development, use and eventual proliferation of progressive displays. In fact, of the 18 proposed format permutations in the ACATS recommendation, 14 are for progressive displays.

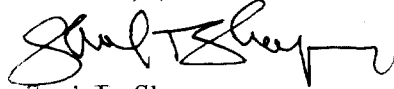
Respectfully,
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As to the presentation of existing 4:3 video programming on a 16:9 display, for those who choose such a system, the receivers will adjust the picture to fill the screen in a manner most pleasing to the consumer. This may mean black bars on the edges of the screen, automatic cropping of the top and bottom or even the use of "pan and scan" to fill the screen according to the cinematographer's artistic vision and the broadcaster's decisions on how to present the material. And for the consumers who choose to purchase less costly 4:3 receivers, or use set-top convertors with their existing sets, similar options will be available to best fill the screens to their preference.

As you are well aware, the issues raised in this proceeding are many and complex, and I regret I am unable to do them all justice in a short letter. In addition to those at Apple and the ASC with whom you agree on this issue. I would encourage you to get more information from Mr Stan Baron, President of the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers at 914-761-1100 or 212-664-7557. Stan has been integrally involved in these matters for many years and will be able to present a well balanced perspective on all issues of concern to you. If you would care to discuss this further with me, please feel free to call my office at 202-418-2600

Rest assured that this proceeding, far from being over, has in many respects just begun. The Commission welcomes and encourages you to actively participate in this process and to share your concerns so that we may make the best decision in the interest of all Americans.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Saul T. Shapiro", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Saul T. Shapiro
Assistant Bureau Chief
for Technology Policy

LAWRENCE KASDAN

345 North Maple Dr.
Suite #209
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

March 29, 1996

Reed Hundt
Chairman of the FCC
1919 M Street, NW
Washington, D.C., 20554

Dear Mr. Hundt,

It has come to my attention that the FCC is presently considering adopting the format proposed by the special interest group known as the "grand alliance" for the next generation of television systems.

As a motion picture director (**Grand Canyon, The Big Chill, French Kiss, Body Heat, The Accidental Tourist, I Love You To Death, Silverado, Wyatt Earp**) I am very concerned that my work be presented to the American public with the greatest emotional impact possible. The currently used interlay display system which the television manufacturers alliance (ACATS) proposes to be used for future advanced television systems is not nearly as good as the recently developed progressive scan system recommended by Apple Computers and the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC). The ACATS proposal to continue the usage of the interlay system (developed in 1939) rather than use the new technology available today is motivated by short term profits and will, if it is passed, only succeed in bringing an inferior product to the American public.

Furthermore, the 1.78 to 1 ratio screen proposed by the "grand alliance" is not wide enough to allow my films their maximum impact. I strongly recommend that the 2 to 1 ratio screen proposed by the ASC be the aspect ratio of choice for future advanced television systems. The compositions that my cinematographer and I choose to make have intrinsic content and it is for this reason that I oppose any cropping of my work. Any cropping of any part of the images we shoot diminishes the effectiveness of our work and impairs the storytelling of the entire film.

The ACATS proposes to pass off this inferior television system to the public. This decision is motivated by nothing more than greed and laziness on the part of television manufacturers interested only in short term profits with absolutely no regard for the images being played on, or for the public who will be watching, the television sets that they create.

I believe the public deserves better than this.

Thank you for your time.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence Kasdan". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "L" and "K".

Lawrence Kasdan